

IMPROVING DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

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Goal: To improve depression remission scores for adolescent patients between 12 to 17 years of age and adult patients aged 18 years or older.

Context: The PHQ9 is a screening tool, completed by patients, that measures the severity of depression. **Depression remission** is when symptoms improve significantly, as evidenced by a PHQ9 score of less than 5 during their **remission window**, which is 10-14 months from the initial depression screening.

WHAT WE DID

- Created and implemented workflows for Behavioral Health (BH), Psychiatry, and Medical on the administration of the PHQ9.
- Implemented staff-driven outreach efforts and explored automated outreach to ensure patients are seen during their remission window for treatment and re-screening for depression.
- Started conducting the PHQ9 via Phreesia (electronic patient check-in system) in April 2024.
- Implemented an enhanced huddle report for all specialties which included the date and score of the last PHQ9 screening, whether it was done timely, and whether the patient's score indicated remission of depression.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Analyzing the data on patients who were not screened timely or whose depression did not go into remission provided valuable insights.

Key findings include:

- 67% of patients were not re-screened during their remission window.
- 27% of patients were screened outside the remission window, but were negative for depression.
- 6% of patients were screened within the remission window and were positive for depression.

Future areas for improvement include increasing PHQ9 screening opportunities and focusing on systematic interventions for patients that continue to test positive for depression.

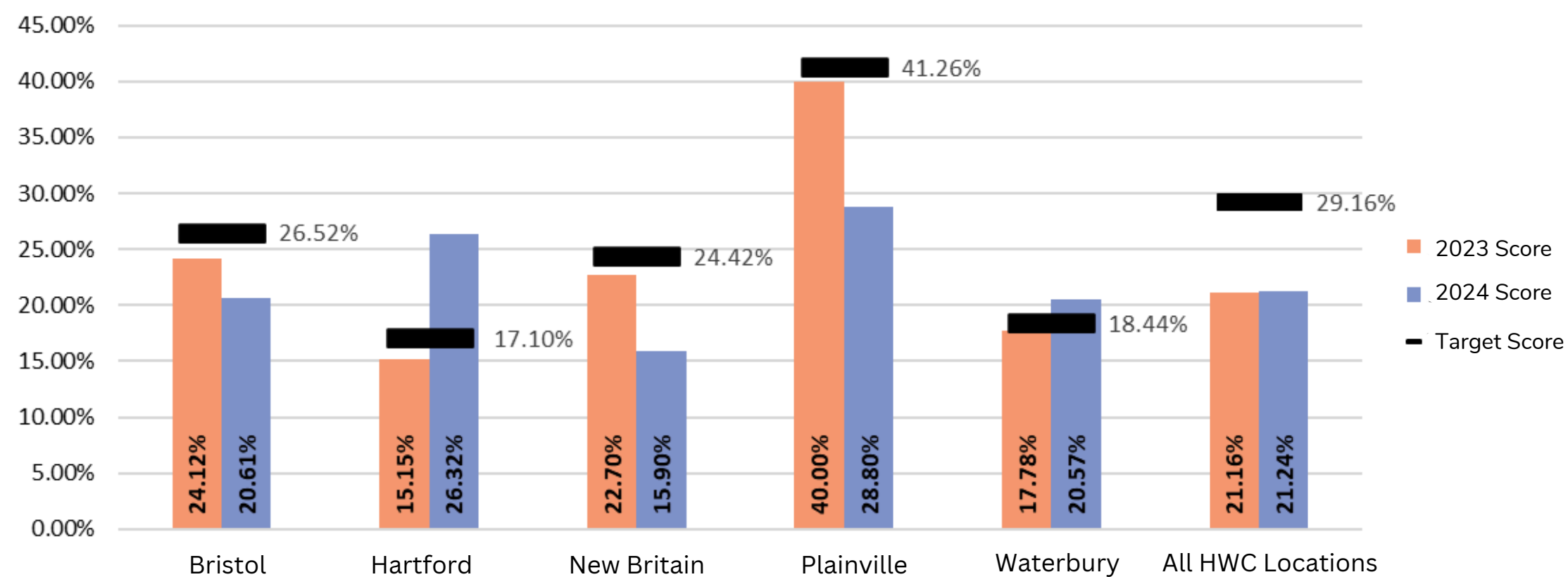
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify specific systematic interventions or intensive treatment guidelines for patients with high PHQ9 scores.
- Create a workflow resource that ensures patients are engaged in services and includes PHQ9 guidance and documentation.
- Integrate depression remission window dates into the enhanced huddle report to promote timely re-screening.

RESULTS

- Across all health center locations, the depression remission score **remained consistent** overall from 2023 to 2024.
- Hartford Health & Wellness Center's patients reported improvements in depressive symptoms, with depression remission scores having **increased by 11%**, far exceeding their 2024 goal.
- Waterbury Health & Wellness Center's patients reported improvements in depressive symptoms, with depression remission scores having **increased by 3%** in 2024, exceeding their 2024 goal.

Depression Remission Scores



Reasons Patients Did Not Meet the Measure in 2024

